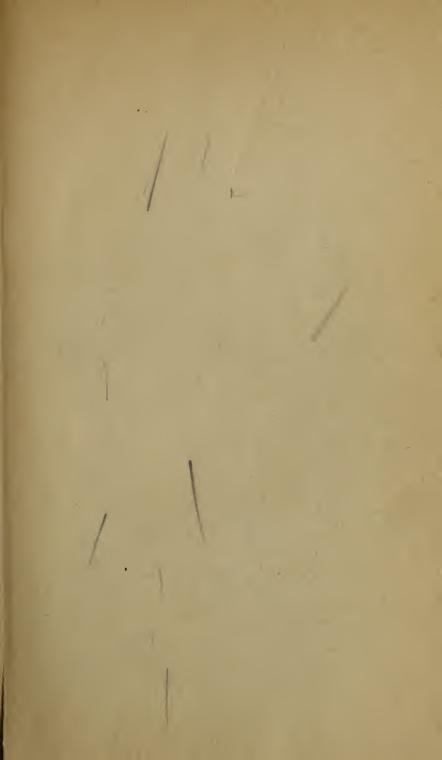


Baten Safe







DECADE SERMONS.

TWO

HISTORICAL DISCOURSES

· OCCASIONED BY THE CLOSE OF THE

FIRST TEN YEARS' MINISTRY

IN CALIFORNIA,

PREACHED IN THE

HOWARD STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, SAN FRANCISCO,

MARCH, 1859.

SAMUEL H. WILLEY,

PASTOR.

SAN FRANCISCO:

PRINTED, AND PUBLISHED BY TOWNE & BACON, No. 125 Clay Street, corner Sansome. $1\,8\,5\,9\,.$



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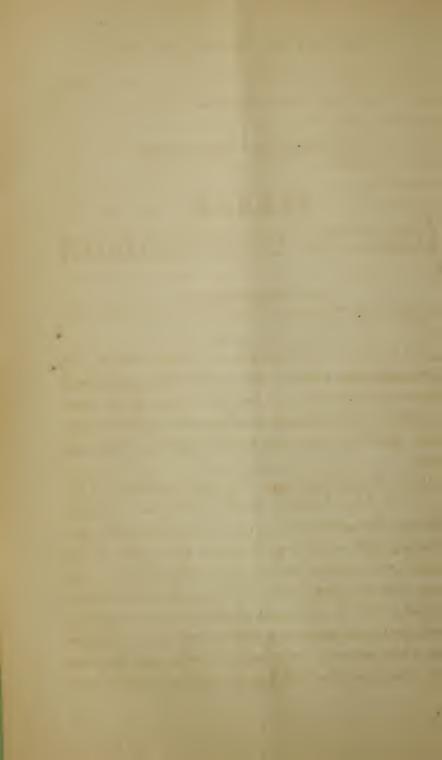
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SERMON.

MATTHEW III: 3.

"THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDEBNESS, PREPARE YE THE WAY OF THE LORD.

MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT."

Ten years ago on Wednesday, the twenty-third of February, about ten o'clock in the morning, the pioneer mail steamship "California," on her first voyage up this coast, entered the bay of Monterey; and as she dropped anchor, cheer answered cheer between the crowds on ship and shore.

It was an exciting scene. The morning mists were lifting off the land, revealing scenery of singular and varied beauty. The plains were covered with verdure, the surrounding hills were emerald green, the heights in the distance were crested with trees combing the sky. And there near the shore was the town, nestled at the foot of the hill; while on its summit was the fort, surmounted by those great guns that had spoken us so hearty a welcome. For, when as yet we were barely in sight, and the huge ship was discovered winding up the bay without sail,

wind, or tide, as none had ever been seen to do before, we saw the sharp flash from them, and the curling smoke, and then came the booming sound echoing over the water. This was California's welcome to the era of steam on the Pacific,—a power that at once reduced the time of travel from the Atlantic States hither, from six months to less than thirty days. And there, over the fort, was the flag of our country, waving gracefully in the morning breeze,—a flag that had traveled all the way across the continent, and now waved from ocean to ocean! Many a tear fell as five hundred voices shouted it welcome.

But this burst of patriotic enthusiasm over, and the quick and eager inquiry was made of those coming from the shore in boats,—"Is it true? Is it true? Are the gold stories true?" And when an assent was returned by nods and signs, and short replies, the multitude were satisfied. The main question was settled, and the passengers gradually left the deck and made their way ashore, some to gratify their curiosity, and some to appease their appetite, for the ship was to remain there to procure a supply of fuel.

For myself, I was in no hurry to rush on with the crowd. I was busy there with thoughts far different from those that ruled the excitement of the hour. The memory of home came back upon me, and the recollections of early years, with all their promise and hopefulness, as now the first step in life's real and main work was to be taken. And how strange the circumstances amid which it must be taken! How remote and unexpected the place! In

what tumultuous times! How different all this from any thing I could have anticipated or would have chosen.

And when indeed I did decide to come to California, when I did consent to embark in the mission to this coast, it was by no means in view of circumstances like these. It was not known or suspected that gold existed here, at the time of that decision. And still, without that knowledge, the country seemed to be of importance sufficient to warrant the decision. And it may be as well here to recall some of the leading characteristics of California as they appeared before the gold discovery, and put them on record before they are forgotten and lost.

And this is all the more important, since it was in view of these facts that the American Home Missionary Society projected the mission to this coast. And I will also say, that I can only speak in this discourse of the churches and ministry of the State that are or have been more or less connected with that society. To go beyond this, and speak of all the Christian churches, would carry me manifestly far beyond the limits of a discourse.

CALIFORNIA AS KNOWN BEFORE THE GOLD DISCOVERY.

Let us go back, then, to the year 1848. The treaty of Guadalaupe Hidalgo, by which Upper California was ceded to the United States, was ratified on the 30th of May of that year. In anticipation of that event, great public interest had been awakened in this country. Books and maps describing its soil, climate and productions were sought and read with avidity. From the few sources of

information then within reach, it became evident that the country would attract to itself a rapid settlement.

A western emigration had been moving hither across the Stony Mountains since the year 1843, increasing in numbers every year. Much of it had found its way into this province, and had made settlements in the valley of the Sacramento, and elsewhere. All reports agreed in respect to the remarkable fertility of the soil, the facility of its cultivation, the salubrity of the climate, and the superior advantages of the country as a place of residence. We were told of the two main rivers of the country, rising in its opposite extremes, running towards each other, and after traversing it for five hundred miles, receiving to themselves many mountain streams coming down from the Sierras, entering the bay of San Francisco nearly together. We were told of this wonderful bay, an inland sea, with its Golden Gate, a single entrance, connecting it with the Pacific ocean. All these facilities of navigation were well described to us. We were told, moreover, of the sunny South, with its vineyards and gardens, its flocks and herds; and over all, its fairer than Italian skies.

We were still further informed that there was then in this country, a population of several thousands, speaking the English language,—that in San Francisco alone there were over five hundred inhabitants, the number having more than doubled in a year,—that the place was thriving, numerous merchant vessels arriving almost daily, that large numbers of houses were going up, and artisans, laborers and mechanics of all kinds were constantly employed at high wages,—that efforts were making to set up a public school, and furthermore, that the citizens had met to ascertain the sentiment respecting the establishment of a church in the town. Such were our latest reliable accounts from the new territory away on the far-off shores of the Pacific. And besides, at home there were various indications that a heavy emigration would pour in hither, speedily.

We remembered that in February, 1846, a ship filled with Mormon emigrants left for this coast, and that the regiment of volunteers, enlisted to serve during the war, sailed from New York in September following, with the understanding that they were to be disbanded here, and become settlers.

And more than all, there was the establishment of a line of steamships, carrying United States' mails from New York to this place by way of the Isthmus of Panama, reducing the time of transit to thirty days or less. This made the public aware that California was no longer a foreign territory, away on the verge of the continent on an unknown ocean, but that it was an integral part of our country, destined to be occupied speedily with the homes of a busy people. There was novelty and intense interest in the idea of this new possession, so far off, and so peculiar in its climate and general features,—room for a young empire, with every facility for the expansion of commerce and the arts, and opportunity for a new development of American enterprise on the shores of the

Western ocean! There was not only novelty, but magnitude, reality and breadth in the idea, and it stimulated the thinking minds throughout the country.

Nor was the forethoughtful enterprise of Christian men behind that of those who projected plans of business and schemes of commerce. Among all the facts stated with respect to this country, as it was in 1847, not one made a deeper impression than this,—that in all the territory, there was not a Protestant minister; nor were there any schools, school houses or teachers.

All these facts became known to the American Home Missionary Society in 1848; and after careful investigation, they became convinced that the time had come to plant a mission on this ground. And they determined that it was their duty to do this, not only for the sake of California and the Pacific coast,—not only for the sake of our common country, but for the sake of the world. They looked at this particular locality on the globe, and were at once impressed with its relative prospective importance. On this point they expressed their views as follows:

"When we look upon a map of the world, it is apparent that the efficiency and intelligence of the human race is lodged mainly in nations lying north of the equator.

"Again: we find the globe marked by four distinct lines, having the general direction North and South. These are the four ocean shores of the Eastern and Western continents. One of these shores is occupied by our own United States,—another by Great Britain, and the states of Western Europe,—the third, that of Eastern Asia, is

covered by China and Japan,—while the fourth, the North West coast of America, is yet comparatively vacant.

"Now a moment's consideration shows that upon two of these shores, the European and American sides of the Atlantic, which are nearest together, is concentrated almost all the regenerative elements on the globe. Whatever of science, invention, mechanical skill, commercial or religious enterprise can be brought to bear on the conversion of mankind, is found in the nations of Eastern America and Western Europe; which, considering the frequency and closeness of their intercourse, may be regarded as lying together. Thus the great depositories of means for human improvement are concentrated on this side of the globe; while the mass of heathenism lies as far off as possible, on the opposite side of Asia and in the islands of the Pacific. And what more probable than that the next step of Providence towards enlightening the heathen world, will be to take some advance position, far on towards the strongholds of paganism, from whence those great auxiliaries of the Gospel, commerce and civilized intercourse, may act with directness and vigor.

"Such an advance position is the vacant coast of Western America. There, on the Pacific coast, are such resources and capabilities of trade as must speedily link the Asiatic and American coasts in friendly intercourse."*

These were the sentiments of the Society, and of the intelligent Christian public, when this mission was projected,—such they believed to be the importance and the prospective influence of the undertaking.

[•] Home Missionary, Vol. 21, No. 9.

These views and motives they communicated to me as one of two whom they had selected as their missionary explorers, to repair hither by the speediest conveyance and open the way for the carrying out of their enlarged and Christian purposes.

I remember well where the message reached me. It was in a beautiful town in Massachusetts, where, fresh from my studies, I was beginning my ministry, and forming those attachments, and entering upon those pursuits that had ever been most congenial with my tastes. It was a most unexpected call, and summoned me to a kind of work which I had never anticipated, and for which I had little taste, and seemed to myself to have less qualification. At first, it appeared to be an impossible undertaking; but as every objection other than that within my own mind had been removed by friends of the mission, I could not refuse to give the subject a candid consideration.

At a distance from my residence was a hill to which I used to walk for exercise. Its summit commanded a view of a wide surrounding country. It was a richly cultivated region, thickly inhabited by an enlightened, intelligent and Christian people. Villages were to be seen on every side, adorned with their beautiful churches, school houses and other public buildings; and off, a little way in the distance, appeared the metropolis of New England, with its spires, and domes, and stately edifices,—a city eminent for its religious, benevolent, and literary institution. It was a prospect to make one's heart glad, and to

surround the idea of a home in such a neighborhood with many and great attractions.

But then came the thought of these far-off shores, a part of my country, settling with our own people, and not a single Protestant minister in the territory. A new state soon to spring into existence, and no leaven of Christian influence gathering around the preaching of the Gospel anywhere within its borders.

This consideration decided the question. My leaving could not be material to such a region as that, where scores might be found to fill the place; but it might be specially important for one who could, to come here, a place having few attractions for a minister of the Gospel then—I resolved to come.

And now for a hasty preparation. Two weeks only were to clapse before the first steamer was to sail from New York for the Isthmus, to connect with the line on this side. But hearty good wishes and cheering words meeting me everywhere took away the keenness of regret, and a commanding motive to a noble and worthy undertaking steadied and inspired the mind. And quickly came the day of departure. The first of December, 1848, found us on our way.

It is not to be denied that there were some misgivings of heart as we swept swiftly down the bay, and the dwellings of friends, the scenes of past happiness, and especially the spire of the dear old church faded away in the distance! It was not easy to let go so suddenly of all behind, and look the uncertain future full in the face! It is a great thing to dispose of this single and only life we have to live in this world. But yet there was down deep in the heart the consciousness of a sincere purpose, and there was an abiding conviction that the undertaking was one that God would bless,—and that was enough.

On we sped, leaving winter behind us vexing the ocean with storms; on we sped, touching at Charleston, and then at Savannah, and then running round to New Orleans, where we were so fortunate as to tarry a week. For a generous Christian hospitality awaited us, and an appreciation of our mission that was most animating.

CALIFORNIA AS A GOLD COUNTRY.

But while we were in the midst of the enjoyment of the pleasant sojourn, about the middle of December, 1848, came the astounding news of "GOLD! GOLD! in California." It could not be doubted. All evidence substantiated it. A special messenger arrived by way of the Isthmus of Panama, bearing despatches to the government—bringing authentic intelligence of the actual discovery of gold in large quantities on the American river, and corroberating the statement by producing specimens of the gold itself!

The news flew from mouth to mouth; the press hurried off extras, announcing it, and the telegraph proclaimed it the country through. In two days after this, while the city was in the excitement created by this intelligence, our ship sailed again—but not now with twenty or thirty passengers for California, as she had before, but with a crowd, the utmost that she could accommodate.

Once more fairly at sea, we had opportunity of gathering up the facts, and judging of our prospects as best we could amid the surrounding excitement and confusion. It became very clear that all our plans were upset. All our anticipations were thrown into confusion. Our undertaking seemed uncertain enough before, but now the prospect was complete chaos. It appeared from all we could learn, that the ordinary occupations of life in California were abandoned—that there was a general rush to the mines—universal excitement—civil and social order broken up—prices and cost of living enormous—and no human foresight able to predict the result!

Americans a mining people! What would they become? They had never been tried. What type of character would they develop? What were the prospects of civilization and religion amid these new pursuits? And how could we discharge our duty? How could we fulfill our ministry? How adapt ourselves to this new and strange state of things? Could we stop and preach in the towns? They told us the people were gone. Could we follow them to the mines? There was nothing very attractive in that idea; and besides, people were said not to be stationary in the mines, but were daily moving from place to place.

And when would this tumult cease, and something permanent appear? Time enough the remainder of a tedious voyage afforded for studying and discussing this unexpected and unprecedented state of things. We consulted the few Christian people we found on board, but we could

arrive at no conclusion beyond this: that both of us should come together to San Francisco, as the most important point, and the best for observation; that a church should be formed here, with which one should remain as the minister, and the other make tours of exploration. With this plan in view, and having made arrangements so far as we could on board to carry it out, we reached Monterey, as before stated, on the 23d of February, 1849.

THE STATE OF THINGS AS LEARNED ON THE GROUND.

Here we learned, on inquiry, that a Protestant minister, a Presbyterian, belonging to the same General Assembly with ourselves, had come to San Francisco from the Sandwich Islands some few months before, and was preaching regularly at the invitation of the citizens. This, of course, rendered it necessary to change our plans of proceedure again. And how should they be laid? In looking in California itself for an answer to this question, we began to realize the odd condition of things of which we had heard, and found that indeed the half had not been told us. The entire American population had either gone, or were preparing to go to the mines. Those even, who were under the obligation of contracts, in numerous instances, ran Soldiers deserted their flag, sailors their ships, and servants their employers, and fled on stolen horses. Even the Governor of the territory, who was a General in the United States Army, together with an officer of the Navy, and the Chief Magistrate of the District, who messed together, had for a considerable time to take to the kitchen

and cook their own food! And even in this they were limited to a very small variety, for the land was nowhere cultivated, and there was consequently no market affording even those articles which we account the necessaries of life.

And when I had determined to remain in Monterey, it was with no little difficulty that I could obtain board, and when I did, it was on the score of hospitality. Fortunately, an unoccupied room was to be had in a building by itself, but not an article of furniture could be found, to be bought or borrowed. Such things were not abundant, because they had all to be imported by way of Cape Horn, from the opposite side of the continent. Nor was there a mechanic in the place to make anything to answer a temporary purpose. The only resource was an empty shop, and its forsaken tools, which the owner had left in his haste to reach the mines; and singularly enough, my first work in California was the making of a few rude articles to serve for furniture in a gentleman's room.

And so I found myself established and ready for duty. Monterey was the capital of the Territory. Several American families resided there, and the place was full of children, the parents of many of whom were desirous of their learning the English language. There seemed, possibly, to be something to be done there, and nothing very definite could be learned of any other place at that time. Such modern towns as Sacramento, and Stockton, and Marysville, and all those now so well known in the mountains, had not then been located or named, nor could it be

foreseen where in the mines, along the rivers, or on the plains, the incoming population would center. It seemed, therefore, best that I should remain there for the time, and preach to the few who would assemble to hear; gather a Sabbath School; begin a school on week days, and do the duties of chaplain to the military post—having meanwhile, good opportunity by correspondence, inquiry, and occasional tours of observation, to learn the country, its peculiar circumstances and wants.

The Sabbath came — my first in California. It was the 26th of February. Notice of divine worship had been previously given, and though the day was rainy, a small audience assembled in an unfinished room, where I preached my first sermon, from 1 Cor. i: 23-4. "We preach Christ crucified; * * * the power of God and the wisdom of God;" presenting the simple idea that our errand to California was to preach the gospel, and that it was meet to commence with that theme, at the very beginning. It was a pleasant hour, enabling us to forget for the time, the untoward circumstances by which we were surrounded, and the dubious prospects before us.

But the time passed on. The country was full of rumors. All man-kind seemed wild to get to the mines. Our good steamship was reported to have reached this harbor, where not only passengers, but hands and officers deserted and left her at anchor. The prospect of a mail from here homeward was therefore not very bright. But by-and-bye, on the 1st of April, came a mail from home, on the second steamer, bringing news of what had trans-

These discourses are published especially with reference to being sent East to many friends of the American Home Missionary Society and other Christian people, in the hope that they will contribute to the interest felt in California, and encourage them to continue their aid in the establishment of churches and institutions of learning in this country.



pired in the excited months succeeding our departure. We then, for the first time, fully realized the extent of the excitement created by the publication of the news of the discovery of gold. It was evident, by a glance at the newspapers and letters brought by the steamer that day, that the whole country was moved, and Europe scarcely less! "It is coming," said a New York press, " "nay, at hand; there is no doubt of it - whatever else they may lack, our children will not be destitute of gold. The world is threatened with a perfect avalanche from California! We are on the brink of the age of gold." And a London print + concluded its remarks by saying: "One cannot but recognize in these glittering spangles, sown in the sand. and these beads adhering to the rock, a providential means of procuring the settlement of the most remote and inaccessible coast in the world!" And so it seemed to be, as we read paper after paper, nothing less than a world-movement, and that it was plainly under the ordering of Divine Providence. Else how came this conjunction of great events? The occurrence of the war—the acquisition of this country by it — the establishment of a line of steamships to open communication with it—all this apparently to prepare the way for the great discovery soon to follow, and the consequences resulting! It was too much for skepticism itself to believe that this coincidence was chance. It seemed. on the contrary, to render certain the great prospective importance of this coast, more than justifying all the anticipations in view of which this mission was planned.

[•] New York Tribune, Dec. 1848. † London Times.

After reading nearly all day, till the eyes refused to serve longer, I wrote a few hasty lines to a friend, among which I find the following:

"My room resembles an editor's. Here lie the papers in piles about me. I have been reading them all day; but it is hard to believe what I read! Is it possible? I say to myself; and then I read over the long columns of names of those that are on their way hither! I confess, I cannot refrain from tears, when I think what is to be gained or lost to the cause of Christ in California! As the settlement of this country is rapid, so in like manner will the development of its social and religious character be rapid.

"Along with this tide of immigration, and on its first wave a few of us have come in the service of the gospel; but what are we, in circumstances like these!"

The position was indeed delicate and trying, even as it appears in the retrospect, after ten years have gone by. At home, all was excitement, expectation raised to the highest pitch, companies leaving for these shores from all parts; the young, the bold, the intelligent, crowding every means of conveyance; people enough to settle a State, build cities and set agoing all the machinery of civilization at once. Many glowing speeches were made, and an excited imagination was permitted to soar at random, picturing a State here on the Pacific, the very pattern of grandeur.

But what a contrast with that did the experience of life present, as it really turned out to be here! There were

no towns to receive the people, no houses to give them shelter, no public buildings in which they might assemble, no churches to invite them to worship; and what could they do? What did it avail that a great many, among these thousands, were intelligent, educated, capable men, prepared to do the State service? They were here but for a few months, or at most two or three years. They were here to obtain gold,—they did not possess it. And if they obtained it they did not wish to spend it here. Their wives, children and friends, - all their permanent interests were at home; and since they were to be away so soon, how could they give either time or money to the establishment of institutions here, requiring years for their maturing? And besides, everything was immensely expensive; so that small gifts, or a little attention devoted to the public good would amount to nothing.

And, still further, the people did not all arrive here as they left home. There was a melancholy deterioration of character in too many cases; and a very great willingness, in consequence, to be free from the restraints of religion and religious institutions. They were willing to have all days alike; an unending din and clamor of business, varied with scenes of coarseness, roughness, profanity and excess.

To know what to do, in such circumstances, and how to act, with any prospect of accomplishing good,—and to know how to represent the case in correspondence at home,—how to convey a correct impression amid circumstances so shifting and so difficult to explain; aware, at the

same time, of the weight that would attach to our words; all these were things very difficult to determine.

But with unwavering confidence in the importance of this field, relying upon the great facts and providential indications before named, we determined to set our faces toward the future, and make the most we could of the present. We employed ourselves much in correspondence at home; seeking to convey correct information concerning the country; its condition, capabilities, resources, and everything pertaining to its people, their habits, disposition and wants.

And, moreover, there were places where churches could be formed with the prospect of their being permanent; for there have always been found some, in every considerable community, who were ready to enter heartily into the work of establishing the institutions of the Gospel.

For doing this, however, I found no warrant in the state of things in Monterey. When the capital was removed in 1850, the American population dwindled to almost nothing. But this city was increasing in importance and size with great rapidity.

On a visit here, in the fall of 1849, I found that the beginnings of churches were clustered near together in the North Western section of the town, while in this vicinity there was a neighborhood of families, almost equal in number to those living in the other more favored portion. Moreover, the hills that separated this section of the city from that were almost impassable; being steep and high, and covered with a growth of tangled shrubbery. After

due investigation, I determined, on leaving Monterey, to attempt the establishment of a congregation here.

With the assistance of two or three Christian gentlemen, a carpenter's shop was found in the valley, in which a small assembly might convene. This was considered a propitious circumstance, for none of the other churches had been more fortunate in the beginning. True to the accommodating spirit of the times, tools were put away, cooking utensils were removed, boards were arranged for seats, and a chest served for a pulpit; and so we began our worship. It was on the 19th day of May, 1850. Sabbath school was first opened, with just four scholars. This was followed by a sermon at which a small number were in attendance. A notice that the place would be suitably fitted up, and that religious worship would be held there regularly thereafter on the Sabbath, was given, and thus closed our first Sabbath worship. Little knew the surging crowds in the streets, in the saloons, and around the noisy "plaza" what was going on here that day. And had they known it all, how insignificant would it have seemed to them, and how much a matter of derision.

Not a moment would it have interrupted the shuffle of the cards, the clink of the coin, the ring of the tumblers at the bars, or the blasts of music, coming from a dozen bands playing incessantly in as many cloth gambling halls.

In circumstances like these were the beginnings of churches made in those early years; in places that seemed most likely to be permanent, by a ministry of seven men, while the State was filling up with a population of more than a hundred and fifty thousand souls. It required courage then, and zeal, and ingenuity, and an abiding confidence in the future, and a strong faith that God would take care of our work, and sometime crown it with success. But the ministry of that day was emphatically and literally "a voice crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." Thus the foundations had to be laid, here and there, as best they might; and then they must be watched and built upon by the faithful few, who never forgot them, and never faltered in their work. The same general state of things existed at first, in every place; and the history of the beginning of one of our churches is very nearly the history of all.

I might proceed to relate how in 1849, on a certain Sabbath, a few Christian people in the town of San José; made their way through crowds, past the saloons of gamblers, and the offices of land speculators, to the old adobe courtroom, and there covenanted together in the name of their Master, Jesus Christ. Or how, the same year, in a little village of cloth tents pitched under the oaks on the banks of the river Sacramento, when the town was all astir; teams going and coming, boats and vessels unloading, a little congregation assembled regularly, for Divine worship; sometimes under the shade of the trees in the open air, and sometimes elsewhere. Or how, away up in the mountains, at a place called Nevada, a neat and tasteful house of worship was erected among the pines, from whence a silver-toned bell was accustomed to ring out its cheerful

notes, echoing and re-echoing among those hills and valleys, calling the miners from their cabins along the hill-sides to assemble and worship God. But all this, though full of interest, would carry me much beyond the limits of my discourse. I have been particular in giving the facts respecting the earliest years, because they are less known, and at the same time constitute a chapter in the religious history of the country that ought not to be forgotten.

WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED IN THE FIRST TEN YEARS.

I can only point briefly, in conclusion, to some of the facts that indicate the progress of the mission during the first ten years. Nearly all the ministers, belonging to the Congregational and New School Presbyterian bodies, were commissioned to this field by the Home Missionary Society; and, though several have left the State, the number at present connected with these bodies is twenty-eight. Under their ministry, there are twenty-five churches, most of which are furnished with good church edifices, and they contain in all, upwards of a thousand communicants. This number seems at first view, to be small; but when it is remembered that the population of this country is so scattered, and that few comparatively are within reach of any of these churches, and that it is only within three or four years that families have begun to come and settle, and make homes in the country, it does not seem surprising that it is at present no greater. And it should be further said, that this membership, small as it is, is very equally

divided among these twenty-five churches; and they are established in the most important and influential places in the State.

As a body, they are united, energetic and faithful Christian people, well established in the country; and they are determined to leave the impress of their Christian faithfulness upon it. But the influence of the ministry of which I am speaking for these ten years, is by no means measured by the number of churches established, the buildings erected, or these rolls of membership. This influence has reached far beyond the congregations to whom the ministers have preached, and the places that have been favored with their pastoral services; it has been a power, silent but efficient in the settling of social order and freeing society from the reign of vice.

In all the places where the Gospel has been steadily preached, a public spirit has been cultivated, schools and libraries and literary societies and benevolent associations have been established, and a general spirit of improvement is plainly apparent. Whether the progress of these two Christian denominations here, for the first ten years, has equaled that of the first ten years of other of the newer American States, I have no statistics accurately to determine, but I find the following facts, pertaining to two States, that throw some light upon the question:

In Iowa, during the first twelve years, while the population increased from 50,000 to 400,000, the ministry numbered 60, the churches about the same, and the membership 2,600.

In Wisconsin, during the first twelve years, while the population grew from 40,000 to 300,000, the ministry increased to 106, the churches to 159, and the membership to 5,400.

In California, in the first ten years, while the population has risen from 50,000 to 500,000, the number of ministers has increased to 25, the churches to 28, and the number of members to 1,000.

In this comparison it is to be noticed that we have two important years yet before us, to make the length of time included in the estimate equal to that covered by the above figures respecting Iowa and Wisconsin; and that our great distance from the Eastern States, the difficulty and expensiveness of getting here, and the peculiarly unsettled condition of our society, would necessarily forbid the expectation that progress here, reckoned by such statistics as these, would be as great as in those nearer agricultural States, where land titles are good, and families move to make them homes.

Beyond the immediate work of preaching and sustaining the Gospel, these two denominations have taken a leading part with other Christian people in promoting the better observance of the Sabbath in the State generally; in the efforts to advance temperance, and furnish the Bible and religious tracts to all the people. They have, at the same time, been mainly instrumental in establishing the oldest religious journal on the coast, The Pacific, and sustaining it for eight years past, at an expense of at least ten thousand dollars a year.

During all these years it has made its weekly visits to its many thousands of readers in all parts of the State; and at the same time has had, and has still, subscribers in almost all the States in the Union. In maintaining this prominent and important Christian agency, a very large number of Christian people of various denominations unite, and its prospects for permanence and usefulness were never so good as they are now.

At the same time they have borne a similar part in founding the College of California—a work in which they share the labor and the honor with others, who are as heartily interested in it as they—and a work of which a distinguished jurist and Christian philanthropist of Massachusetts lately expressed this opinion:

"If there is one spot of more interest than another in this vast continent, stretching as it does from ocean to ocean, and exerting an influence already great and rapidly increasing, on the destinies of mankind in all continents, and for ages to come, that spot, in my view, is the first well endowed seat of learning, baptized with religion, which is, or soon will be, established in California."* In such a work, so highly and so justly appreciated by the leading minds of the country, it is a joy and an honor to have part.

And during this ten years, other Christian denominations have not been behind us in enterprise, in works of well-doing, and in progress; so that now the number of Protestant ministers in the State is put down at 221; the number of churches 153, embracing a membership of 6,652.†

^{*} Hon. S. H. Walley's Speech, Oct. 1858.

Meanwhile the country at large has made rapid advances in everything that constitutes a sound and healthful prosperity. It has sprung up from almost nothing, from being foreign and unknown territory, and has become a sovereign and independent State, and a member of the American Union. From its mines it has given to the commerce of the world more than six hundred millions of dollars in gold; from its vast grazing grounds, so long the range of wild herds, there are now fenced, and under cultivation, not less than a million of acres; its inhabitants number half a million souls, and of these nearly fifty thousand are children. Schools and literary societies are springing up all over the State, and the public libraries already in existence, contain seventy-five thousand volumes. Ten years ago one weekly newspaper was all we could boast, whereas now it requires very nearly one hundred newspapers and periodicals to satisfy the demands of the reading public. Then news had to creep along slowly up and down the coast, and to and from the mines, carried on horseback by weekly or semi-monthly expresses; but now our news is quickly communicated by the swiftest steamers, and the most rapid stages, over the whole State, or transmitted over a thousand miles of telegraphic wire, stretching away in many directions, to the remotest parts. And now, at the end of the same ten years, we find ourselves living in a city, sprung up from a mere hamlet, aspiring to be the third commercial city of the Union! A city of 70,000 inhabitants, with schools and churches, with humane and benevolent institutions, literary associations and libraries,

and works of art, with noble structures lining our streets for the service of commerce, and tasteful and elegant residences for homes for our people, adorning the hills and valleys around! At the same time our trade is reaching out, as the various resources of the country develop, and finds new channels to the north, and the south, to the east, and the west.

Of course, ten years, at the beginning of the existence of a State or a city, is nothing more than its infancy; and if that infancy with us has developed so much of strength, ability, and promise, what may we not anticipate for our youth and maturity! Time is hastening on, and contributing to our advancement as it goes. Our population is increasing, and our institutions are becoming established. The people from many quarters are assembling about us, and are making for themselves homes. In the midst of this movement, so steady and constant, even now in these early years, it needs not the aided vision of any "seer" to enable any one to say:

"I hear the tread of pioneers
Of nations yet to be;
The first low wash of waves where soon
Shall roll a human sea.

The rudiments of empire here Are plastic yet, and warm; The chaos of a mighty world Is rounding into form!"

And while this is going on, and in the second ten years now beginning, we will with all diligence preach the gospel, as the only regenerating and divinely saving power in human society. The influence of the gospel we will seek to establish and disseminate, that in years to come, when this coast shall teem with a population more numerous than that of the Atlantic shore, it may bless the whole land, and be borne on the tide of commerce and civilized intercourse to the nations of the ancient East.

TI.

SOME OF THE PECULIAR CHARACTERISTICS OF CAL-IFORNIA, AS A MISSIONARY FIELD, DURING THE LAST TEN YEARS.

II. Cor ix: 23.—"In labors more abundant."

There are several marked peculiarities that have distinguished this country as a field for missionary effort during ten years past, and have made it different from any before known. Most of these peculiarities have resulted from one single cause—the assembling here of a population drawn together in pursuit of gold—and they ought now to be considered and remembered, for they should be taken into account in any estimate of what has been accomplished up to this time, and in all plans that are laid for doing good.

They should also be described to the friends of this mission, and of pure religion in the older States, in order to give them a just idea of the facts as they have existed here, that they may be the better able to know what results to expect from the labor that has been expended, and be encouraged to continue their efforts to supply this new and remote State with an evangelical ministry.

First in the enumeration of these peculiarities, I will mention — The great variety of things the minister has been obliged to do.

All who have come and commenced congregations in new places have had substantially the same experience, varied only in slight circumstances. The beginning may have been made in the midst of a population of thousands or hundreds, but always with the same absence of facilities and advantages. Every missionary found the people in the place in which he was to be a minister, living in tents or cabins, or in houses of the most unsubstantial structure. Perhaps the place had not been known or inhabited at all twelve months before. Of course there could be no public buildings or rooms where an assembly could convene for public worship; and the missionary, a stranger, knowing no one, and among an excited multitude, also unknown in most cases to each other, had to devise the best arrangements he could. Whatever place he could find, whether in the open air, or beneath some tent-roof, he had to pitch upon it, and then give notice in any way most likely to attract attention, that there would be public worship on the Sabbath. In the general bustle and confusion of business, the announcement would gather a few, who, either from true sympathy, or curiosity, would assemble; and through them, probably, better arrangements could be made for the future. And then there must be visiting and making acquaintance, and a mingling with the hurrying, noisy multitude, till it is ascertained whether it is best to attempt the establishment of a congregation. It turns out that it is; then the planning must be done mainly by the minister. He may get a little help in this from now and then a man who will or can spare moments enough from his business to consult with him, but the plan, as a whole, must be his.

To begin with, as a matter of course, some kind of a house of worship must be erected, and upon him falls the burden of the work, as much as if it were his own private enterprise. First comes the raising of money. To accomplish this he must go about, day by day, soliciting and gathering a little here and there among strangers of every variety of occupation and disposition till enough is collected to warrant the beginning of the work of building. In prosecuting this part of the undertaking there must be extraordinary patience and perseverance. One successful missionary in a mining town recorded his experience in this part of the work thus: "Many said they were going home immediately, and cared nothing for California, not enough, at any rate, to build churches for her. There was no use in building churches or preaching here. They had always given to such things at home, but they came out here to make money, and they were going to keep it, and by-and-bye build churches and support the gospel in the States. Others were opposed to sectarianism. If the church was to be free and open to all, meaning by all, every wandering sect that might come along in the name of religion, they would give as much as any one. Others again, did not believe the Bible. Some had seen too many ministers at monte-tables to trust the first one that came along. In the case of many, to attempt to get their gold seemed like contending with wild beasts for their prey. Often, and even for hours at a time, with a pile of auriferous gravel or surface dirt for seat, or platform, were objections heard and answered, cavils refuted, questions proposed, argument, illustration and anecdote brought forward to prove to the returning Californian a better doctrine, i. e., 'None of us liveth to himself;' to correct infidel notions that were working like unholy leaven; in short, to preach to hundreds who were not at all wont to remember the Sabbath, the sanctuary, the Bible or their God."

After the raising of the money, or more likely in connection with it, must come the expending of it in the purchase of material and in payment for the work, together with the superintendence of that work while it is in progress. Then must follow the finishing and the fitting up, and finally the dedication, in which the minister appears for the first time in his proper vocation in connection with the work.

In all this variety and diversity of care, the minister has always found some volunteering to help, to the very extent of their power; but they have generally been few, and burdened with their own business. At the same time, the preaching of the gospel must be sustained, and Sabbath services prepared for; the sick must be visited, and funerals attended; strangers welcomed, and directed, and assisted, often in the beginning of their residence. The work of the last ten years has thus tested the ingenuity and tact, as well as the intellectual ability and resources of ministers in an extraordinary degree.

Meanwhile, everything that has been done, has been at great cost and expense.

Any suitable place of worship required for its erection at least five or six thousand dollars, and more in proportion to its size — a large amount, indeed, for one man to collect of strangers in little sums, by personal solicitation. And while this was going on, the minister must live, and that at a far greater cost than the little congregation could bear. The rent of a small house, containing three small rooms, varied from sixty to one hundred dollars a month. Domestic service was so costly as to be entirely out of the account. The prices of provisions, especially in the interior, were two or three times what they are now. Traveling expenses were very heavy, and every movement required money.

Again: All that was attempted toward religious institutions here in past years was undertaken in the midst of an overruling excitement.

The possibility, the chance of speedy and large gains, and perhaps of sudden wealth, excited the whole community. The miner was excited about his claim; the specu-

lator about his lands, and the merchant about his profits of trade; and the facts related of some in the mines who were very fortunate, and the unexpected occurrences that had made others, little thinking it, unexpectedly wealthy. perhaps by real estate, or the extraordinary high price of some article of merchandise, all tended to keep expectation up to fever heat; and this was what everybody wanted. They were in haste to make money, so as to be soon away and at home at rest in the enjoyment of a competence, if not of a fortune. And this phantom of success was always tempting people, coming just within the grasp now of one, and now of another, and then for the most part bounding off; but being yet in full view, redoubling the eagerness of pursuit. And adverse circumstances thrusting themselves in to turn men aside in their pursuit of success were battled vigorously and powerfully, as they scarcely ever were elsewhere. At first, people thought they could, by one grand exertion, reach their individual ends without paying much attention to social order or civil government. But they were soon undeceived; for the wicked and designing, aware of their chance, began to prey upon society, and threw town after town, and city after city, and sometimes the whole country together, into the utmost confusion. And besides, there have been several prevailing excitements respecting the discovery of gold in various and remote parts, that have swept over the country like a tempest, intensely moving the public mind for the time. In other regions, particularly in the agricultural districts, the pendency of questions of title to the

lands, and the uncertainty of the issue of litigation, have kept the minds of people in a feverish state. We have lived in the region of storms and tornadoes, and they have come down upon us often with very little warning, and when we least expected them.

Right in the midst of this earnest, excited, uncertain state of the public mind, the ministry have been obliged to labor, seizing every possible opportunity to gain attention to religion, and awaken it with all intensity; not knowing at what moment some new and dissipating excitement might carry away all before it. The only time we have ever seen a general attention to religion, betokening the approach of a revival, one of those great excitements swept over the whole State, and drew after it the attention of the whole public. Some blessed fruit was borne, comely, and beautiful, and rich, unto eternal life; but the great and glorious promise of hope was blasted and has never revived! We live where mammon claims the right of sole dominion, and he rules with an iron scepter! But you can all bear me witness, with what frequency those sweeping excitements have agitated society, and how they have hindered the progress of religion.

And it has been true, at the same time, that there has been an extraordinary readiness to ignore religion in California, and abjure the reign of principle, and strike for what was profitable, expedient, or popular.

Multitudes who have been the sworn disciples of Christ at home, have never made it known in this country. They have allowed themselves to be numbered among the enemies of their Lord, and it is deeply to be feared that many of them will be disowned of him in the last great day! Many who have advocated and practiced strict total abstinence from all intoxicating drinks as a beverage elsewhere, have here broken their pledge, trampled upon principles they knew to be right, and have fallen into the loose habits that have prevailed. And even the principle of the life-long obligation of the marriage-vow, many have ventured to think, or pretend to think, was a whim or a refined superstition, and have dared to break it at will! For many a generation will this whole land suffer for the sins of this sort already committed here. But this extreme restiveness, under the restraint of any principle that checked present appetite, has been singularly manifest in years past, and far too often indulged. The spirit of impatience, chafing at restraint, has everywhere opposed the work of the minister. It has risen up, and revolted against the Authority in whose name he has spoken. It has said: We will not have this religion to reign over us.

Another peculiarity of this country as a missionary field has been, the universal desecration of the Sabbath.

When the multitudes landed here in 1849-50, the great majority cared nothing for the day, and those who did care, and desired to observe it, were hardly able to do so. Scattered about in tents among others, they could only distinguish it by refraining from ordinary labor. Thus, as it were, by general consent, the sacredness of the day was practically forgotten in every place, and the business of merchants, and of many kinds of mechanics, was more

active on that day than on any other of the week. The Sabbath was principally distinguished by the unusual crowd of people engaged in trade, by the coming and going of stages, and teams loaded with merchandise; while above all other noise and din resounded the voices of auctioneers and criers, haranguing their crowds in the streets. To this must be added the darker picture of dissipation and excess. Said one, writing from a mountain town in 1853: "The Sabbath dawned, a lovely day. All nature seemed to praise God; but not so with man. All stores were open, the voice of the auctioneer was heard, and I was told that more business was done upon this day of the week than upon all the others put together." Another, writing from another town, the same year, says: "The Sabbath is awfully desecrated. It is the great day of business and pleasure. Every store and shop is open and filled with customers. On the way to church I pass three large gambling saloons in full blast, each containing three times the number that are found in any worshipping assembly in town. Stages are constantly arriving, crowded with miners from adjacent camps, to spend the day in dissipation or riot, or in business. Enormous trains of freight wagons are coming in; the merchants are interested in their arrival on this day, for unloading their goods is a cheap way of advertising. All these things, together with dog, bear and bull fights are here the order of the day on the Sabbath!"

And this is the record of still another. "On the Sabbath I pass by a saloon. It is crowded. There are tables loaded with coin, and men,—yes, and women too, are about them.

The proprietor of this saloon, though a man of infamous notoriety in the place from which he came, is here somewhat of a lion. I go on, and I pass a room where a man is finishing on the eve of the day of God, at eight o'clock in the evening, a walk which has been continued from four o'clock on Wednesday afternoon without cessation, either to eat or sleep. A crowd is in the room, on the walk and in the street, who pay fifty cents each to see the wonder. I hear a bell and a crier. It is the summons to the theater. A band of music in connection with a circus has played almost constantly during the day and evening. Houses of suspicious, nay, notorious character are upon our public streets. We must pass them often. There are places without number where liquors are sold and drank. Our stores and offices and shops are crowded, and never does the artisan or the business-man labor as to-day."

And still another says: "On each Sabbath-day may be heard, mingling with the tones of the church-going bell, and the voice of praise and prayer,—the piano, and the money-chinck of gambling houses, the violin, and drum, and tripping step of the 'fandangos;' the loud laughs and curses of half intoxicated men; the growl and bark and yell of fighting dogs; and underneath these, the 'busy hum of the sons of trade.'"

Amid scenes like these, the ministry of the past ten years have had to pursue their work. In the beginning, it has been in every place alike. And in every place where they have persevered, these terrible evils have abated. But it has required faith and courage and great persistence to grapple with such evils, and contend with them to the end. These conflicts with wickedness have been a stern reality in this State. They have tried every man's force and endurance to the utmost. And what has been done, has been accomplished against these fearful odds. It has been the work of a determined few, in the face of these unprecedented difficulties.

Concerning these obstacles to Christian effort, another writer upon California has said: "The manner of living and social customs here are unfavorable to the minister's work. For so large a population, the number of families residing together in the 'family home' is exceedingly small. The majority of the people are either unmarried, or live here without their families, taking their meals promiscuously at restaurants, and lodging for a week, or perhaps only a night, in the same place. It will be readily seen, that such a society is not easily accessible to Christian teachers. or to the operation of moral and religious organizations. Such a people may be said to have no homes,—to be literally a floating population; and if brought within any particular influence, the occasion must be sought by themselves. It is lamentably true that the appropriate observance of the Sabbath is often neglected here, by persons who, at home, are regular, and even rigid in their observance of it. The people have come to gather gold, and as they cannot serve God and mammon at the same time, they contrive some conscience-quieting excuse to kneel. while here, with idolatrous devotion at the altar of mammon."

I have dwelt the longer upon these points, because the facts are prominent and ruling ones in the history of the past, and must have their place upon the record.

In all that has been said, our population has been characterized as a floating one. There have been several leading causes that have combined to make it so. In the first place, the people came, not to settle, but to go where they could make the most money, and return home soonest. When this purpose to return gradually gave way and a determination to remain here was formed, the occupations of all engaged in mining, and business dependent on mining, subjected them to the necessity of frequent removals from place to place. And those who devoted their time to agriculture were unsettled for another reason. All the best farming land is covered with conflicting titles, and no persons, of course, living upon such lands can count themselves settled, or feel courage or inclination to make much outlay for institutions looking mainly to the future for their value! Where titles are so uncertain, there is no foundation to anything. There is no stability or repose even in the minds of men, and little readiness to unite in measures of civil, social, or religious improvement.

Another characteristic of our communities, very unfavorable to the success of the minister's work, has been the absence of those social ties and bonds of relationship that unite families and individuals in older societies, and cement them together in interest and affection. As strangers, or as those but slightly acquainted, people may unite in giving to a common cause,

and maintaining good institutions; but when Christians awake to the duty of prayer and personal effort for the salvation of the souls of their neighbors, the heart is greatly enlisted and efforts are greatly increased, if the individuals in question are esteemed and loved as friends and relatives. There are not many cases where this power comes into operation in a society as new as that in the various towns of this State.

Again, the peculiar climate of the interior of this State, in the summer, is a circumstance much in the way of a minister's success.

· The extreme heat of the long sunny days for the six months through, is debilitating and exhausting. Severe intellectual effort and regular habits of study are almost impossible, while traveling in the discharge of pastoral duty, and for the purpose of preaching at out-stations is very fatiguing. And preaching itself is a severe wear upon the vital energies. But all these disadvantages of climate to the minister himself, are of but small account when compared with the weariness they cause his wife. For, as I have before stated, the great cost of domestic service puts it far beyond the reach of a minister, with his limited and uncertain salary. Alone, therefore, in the charge of her house, and the care of her little children; subject to the multitudes of calls, and at the same time "given to hospitality," in obedience to the Divine word, what chance is there that a woman can endure for many years, however strong her constitution may have been originally, and however much she may have the great work of her mission at heart?

Finally, everything pertaining to the success of churches and institutions connected with the Gospel has been at all times surrounded with great uncertainty.

Some of us remember the day when this church was half finished, and the work so far was completely paid for, and just then the great May fire of 1851 consumed the city, and left it a wide desolation of ashes and smouldering ruines! No more could we collect for completing the house on that subscription paper, and to open another would have been folly. There was no other resort but a loan, entailing a burdensome debt, overhanging us for at least four years. In Marysville, some years after, the church building itself was burned, and that in Sacramento barely escaped a similar fate, and this only to fall a few years after before the wider sweep of the devouring element. Then the church in Nevada fell; that beautiful church, the first to go up in the mountains. And more recently, a new and tasteful building just completed in Downieville, the pride of the village, before it had been dedicated or used, took fire and was burned to the ground. We had hardly expressed our regrets at that, and sent our offerings of sympathy to the afflicted church, when we were startled with the intelligence that the church in Sonora was in ashes. A fine and comely house, the result of years of patient toil and great exertion consumed all in a few moments! The measure of the losses referred to in the foregoing recital, can never be understood outside of California. But those little churches with their constant pastors, though cast down, have not been destroyed. All have been enabled in one way or another to rebuild, and some possess better edifices than before. Nor do these facts illustrate the only kind of uncertainty that has surrounded the way of these churches. Often, when the Gospel has seemed to be gaining the ear of the public and reaching the hearts of many, giving promise of results, some civil disorder has broken out, filling the whole community with sudden excitement,—or some reverse has happened in the commercial circles, shaking at once all business confidence, and prostrating all courage for improvements. And so again and again have we been thrown back upon choatic disorder, slowly each time to work our way out, in the hope that the like would not occur again.

But the years are gone—those first ten years of our State's history—and their record is completed. I have sought to recall some of the characteristics of those years, as they have pertained to the success of the Gospel, not because the retrospect is agreeable or very satisfactory to remember, but because it is important to a right understanding of the circumstances in which we have been obliged to work. But we turn our faces toward the future and survey our work, surrounded now with more encouraging prospects. This noble country, by its mild and varied climate, and its numerous advantages, has converted a great multitude of sojourners into citizens and permanent inhabitants. They begin to dwell in their own houses. Their families are here. They are surrounding themselves with the refinements and elegancies of life.

The feverish anxiety for sudden gains is materially moderated. A steady business, vielding a fair competence, is no longer looked upon as unworthy a man's time. Attention has been turned to civil affairs, and economy and thrift begin to appear there also; and our public credit stands fair before the world. Sound character and irreproachable habits begin to be estimated at their true value, and to command places of trust and responsibility. Religion is greatly more respected, even by those who do not profess any love for it. Increasing numbers attend divine worship on the Sabbath wherever there are established congregations, and there are some always ready to relieve the pastor of that endless detail of things that a few years ago fell all upon him. The Sabbath is more generally observed everywhere, especially where there are places of worship to which people can resort. The noisy and barbarous amusements of former years are no longer tolerated to any extent, and the tendency is toward the suspension of all kinds of business on Sunday, as in other States.

There is greater permanence and more system to business in the towns, and in the mines, and consequently more stability to the population. The great cause of fluctuation in the agricultural neighborhoods—conflicting land-titles—is slowly giving way, though it promises long to operate against the best interests of the country.

Moreover, in business, men are more secure—less liable to reverses and sudden financial troubles than formerly, and consequently they can without anxiety, turn their attention to the higher interests of religion and immortality. There are those who determine to do what they can to make this country a place fit to be the inheritance and home of a Christian people, and thus leave it to their children after them. They are joining together in plans for elevating the moral tone of society; rearing institutions of education and religion; spreading the Bible and Christian religion throughout the land. There are Christian men and women who join with the pastors in earnest Christian effort for the conversion of souls, and the salvation of all. So opens the second ten years. After all the difficulties, and doubts, and dark uncertainties of the past, thus hopefully are we permitted to set our hands to the work of the future. We may look for more helpers. As population increases, and the new fields call for them, the Missionary Society will not be slow to increase our ministry. So let us go forth then anew, in the name of our divine Master. Though few, we are entrusted with the establishment and defence of the gospel in one of the most important parts of the world. We are central. From us must emanate influences of salvation northward, to our new sister State; eastward, to the gathering population the other side of the Sierras; southward, too, and westward, far over the broad ocean, to the centers of pagandom itself.

Philanthropists! Christians! our situation is conspicuous and responsible! Let us not be blind to the importance of the work given us here to do! Everything encourages us to work with our might, in this forming time of society. We wield influences that reach far, far into the future. Let us not attempt too much, but let us do well what we undertake. Let us work for the approbation of our divine Lord, and not for men, and so press on in the duties of every day.

Not many tens of years are to pass with any of us, before we go to render each our account to Him personally. How many entered with us into the strange and exciting scenes of the ten years gone, and have not come on with us to see its close. So will it be with many of us, before another ten years has gone by. They have fallen by the way. Let the thought stimulate us to work while it is day, and fill us with redoubled zeal! It is a glorious thing to be where we can make our lives so valuable to the world. Let us expend them with a true Christian economy, such as we shall approve when we review our course in another world, from which we can never return to correct the errors or neglects of the present life. And so may we all meet the welcome approval of our Lord.

